

Dead Man's Handle

You don't have to be alive to hold the dead man's Handle and someone is keeping this train from coming to a dead stop.

This is an adventure that can be adjusted to meet the needs of your group on a large train trip in which you do not mind the group from making it to their destination. It is important for the GM to keep track of the amount of time that the passengers are on the train.

Background

This train is a can of worms and a kettle of fish stirred together and left in the sun to rot, it smells like week old death or it will. Your players are going to be forced to eat it. Several things are going on in this train and it is up to you Marshall how much you make them deal with. Furthermore, I will give you the set up but it is up to your players how they solve their predicament. How much of this plays out and how it is solved is up to you. Bayou Vermilion is an appropriate train line to use for this but it is up to you. A cult is summoning a demon in the dome car of the train and as a side effect the passengers are being turned into Zombies. The order of the train can be changed in any way that you want or you can leave them in alphabetical order. The kitchen, dome car and water car should remain in that order. It takes two walking actions or a running to transverse each car. Climbing to the top of the car takes an agility check at a -2 and if they do not succeed they are fined but must do a fear check of spirit and if they do not succeed they may not try to go on top for the rest of the trip. Walking on top of the train requires agility checks and if they fail they must do a second or fall from the train taking falling damage.

On this train is two enforcement agents of your choice. Either Agents or Marshalls, select and find stats in the Marshall's Handbook. The players can make notice roles to notice them and on raises can see that they are poking around and monitoring the confiscating of weapons. These agents will be staying in one of the suits. There is obviously something going on and the players are asked to surrender their weapons which will be kept in a forward car that will be guarded. These agents are prospective extras with knowledge to help the posse. Additionally, 4 high class passengers board the train.

The players also boarding the train is a number of cultists equal to at least 9 robed figures. Notice or investigations roles on these figures will show that they are tattooed in intricate patterns and a raise will show that one is obviously leading the rest. They will be seen again later. This gang are the varmints behind it all. There are two other train cars of passengers. I recommend 2 times more than the number of players. These half will become zombies and the other half will become a Glom (Marshall's handbook) if you want this to be more difficult.

This train also is carrying a small platoon of soldiers. These soldiers can be of any affiliation you would like. There are 12 of them, 10 of them use the basic soldier stats from the Marshall's Handbook and 2 veterans. They are escorting one automaton. This automaton will remain inactive unless you are feeling Ornerly or particularly saintly. The soldiers can also help or hinder depending on how things go.

All Aboard

The posse is asked to relinquish their weapons and it is up to the Marshall whether you let them get away with anything or somehow persuade the guard to allow them to keep something. They are seated in the passenger car or the sleeper car. Give them a few rounds to investigate and move about the train. Each train car will be described on the page it is on. Be creative and throw in whatever you would like.

One of two things will trigger the start of action: either you get bored of them messing around or they start to try to go past the kitchen. When this happens three of the cultists coming rushing through heading toward the engine. One is a cultist and the other a cult leader from the Marshall's Handbook. In the end they are a distraction. If the posse gives chase do combined chase rules or allow them to fight but unless they have befriended the agents they may not understand and be on the wrong side.

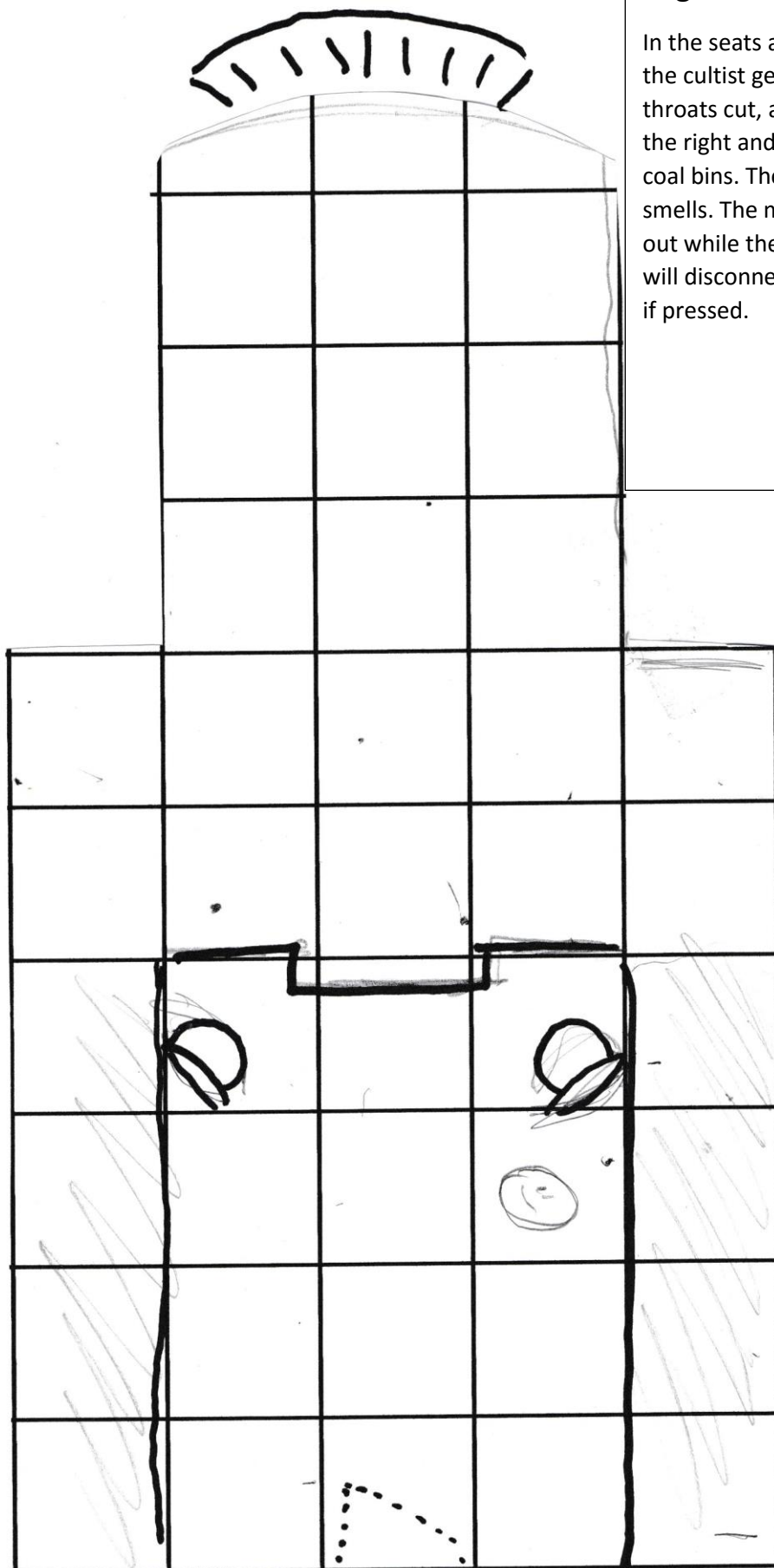
If they choose to ignore these cultists the cultists will lock the doors and take command of the train and killing the conductor. Every two or three (make this choice based on how difficult you want to make it) rounds after the cultists leave the dome car have the "infection" move from the back of the train forward. Keep track of how far the infection has spread every time it comes to an occupied car convert a D6 worth of passengers. The infection does not spread until everyone in the car is converted. You can make these mindless townsfolk if you want this to be easy or full on zombies. If the entire train including the soldiers is converted. The round after convert one of the train cars full of zombies into a Glom, this too can be found in the Marshall's handbook. This is another option based on how hard you want this encounter to be. If the players have somehow gotten the soldiers on their side it is completely up to you whether they are converted or not. This is also true of the agents on the train.

If the cultists take control of the engine they will stop the train in 20 rounds, disconnect it, and drive away.

When or if the posse goes the other way toward the dome car, and get through the locked door, they will find 6 cultists completing a ritual. The room is glowing with energy and requires a fear check at 4. The floor is glowing and each cultist is holding a knife. You should start a timer at 6 rounds or less if the GM wants it to be more difficult. This counter makes things tense. The cultists do not react to the posse unless attacked. They will hold their cards and attempt to interrupt any action taken against them by attacking back. If the posse describes actions that would kill a cultist the counter goes down. If they incapacitate and describe actions that would not kill a cultist the counter is moved up. Do not tell them this is the case. If the counter gets to zero then they remaining cultists kill themselves and the summoning is completed. I recommend a demon from the Marshall's handbook but you can opt for any level of difficulty. You have choices if the cultists are incapacitated. You could have the ritual start and just have them deal with the train full of zombies and other fun, you could have the ritual continue but with more time available, or do as you see fit. They still have a train full of zombies, a glom, some cultists trying to take over a train, a bunch of confused soldiers with an automaton, and a couple of agents to explain things to depending on what has happened previously.

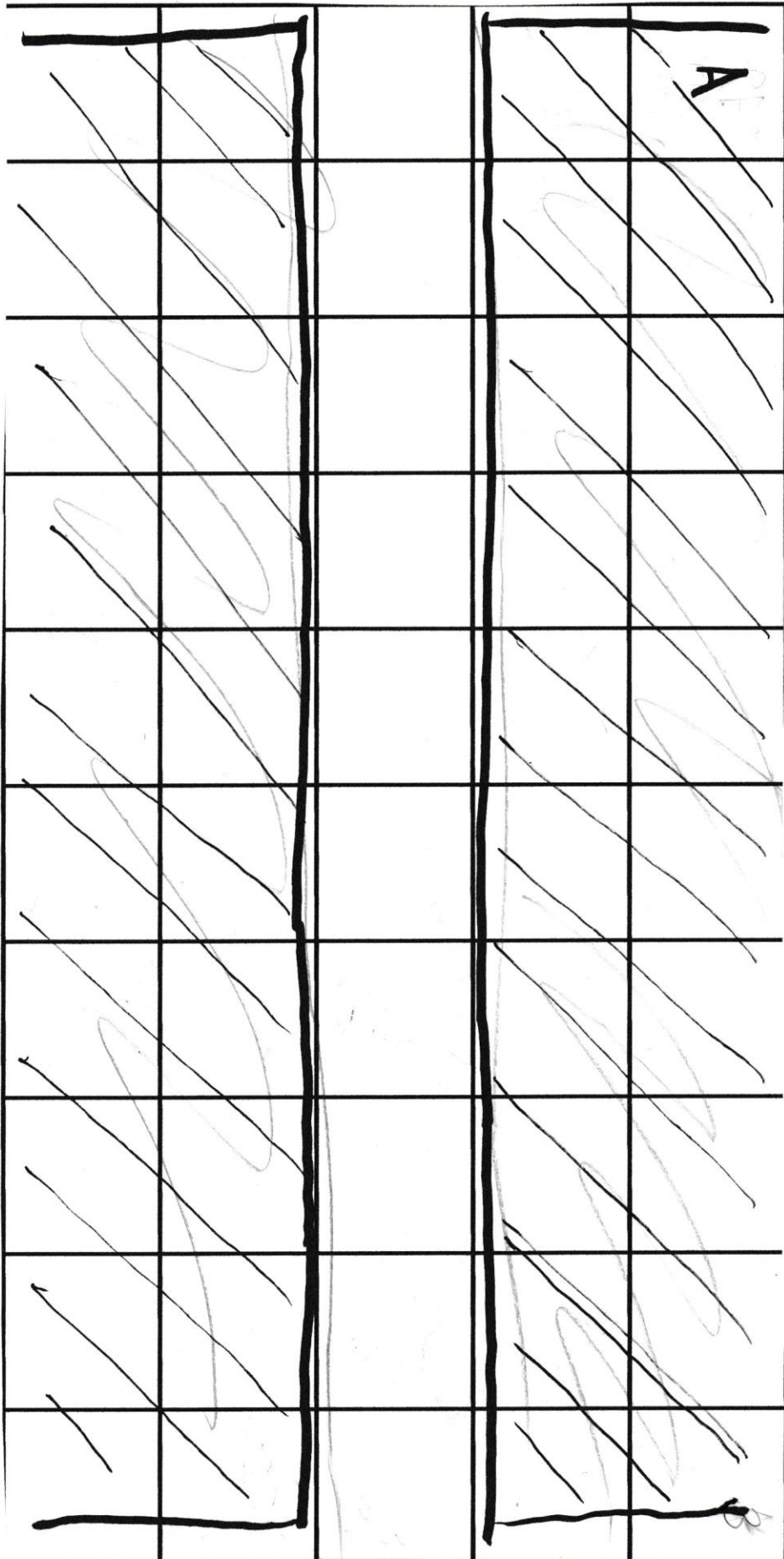
Play test suggestions:

- The weapons are near the engine and the military has a room full of weapons including a flame thrower and Gatling gun.
- Some players have given up and abandoned train.
- Befriending the soldiers or the agents is a help.
- The automaton kills zombies dead.
- The water tank, if broken or blown up can wash away the ritual if you would like.
- The kitchen has gas tank that can be blow up similarly to tnt and would blow away the back of the train. This is dangerous for everyone but blows up the back of the train.
- There is cutlery in the kitchen.
- The carts in the kitchen block doors pretty well.
- The soldier are not interested in helping if you try to steal their things and can be pretty belligerent if you try to go through their car without permission or persuasion rolls.
- A flamethrower in a small space is bad.
- Have fun with this!



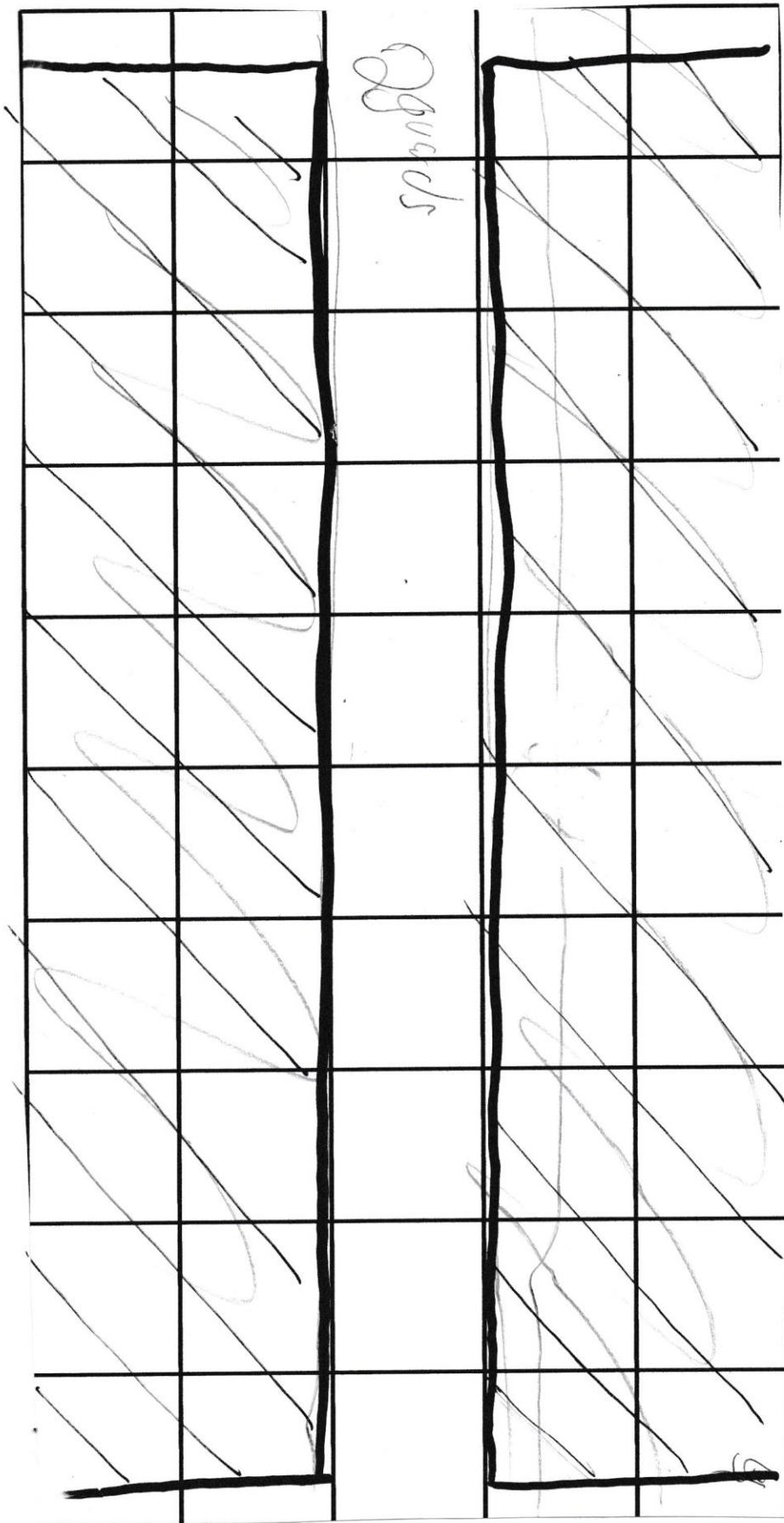
Engine

In the seats are the conductor and his assistant, if the cultist gets here then you find them dead, their throats cut, and cultists manning these stations. To the right and left of their seats are ghost rock and coal bins. The engine is a ghost rock burning and smells. The minor cultists will attempt to keep you out while the cult leader continues to drive. They will disconnect the train and the leader will drive off if pressed.



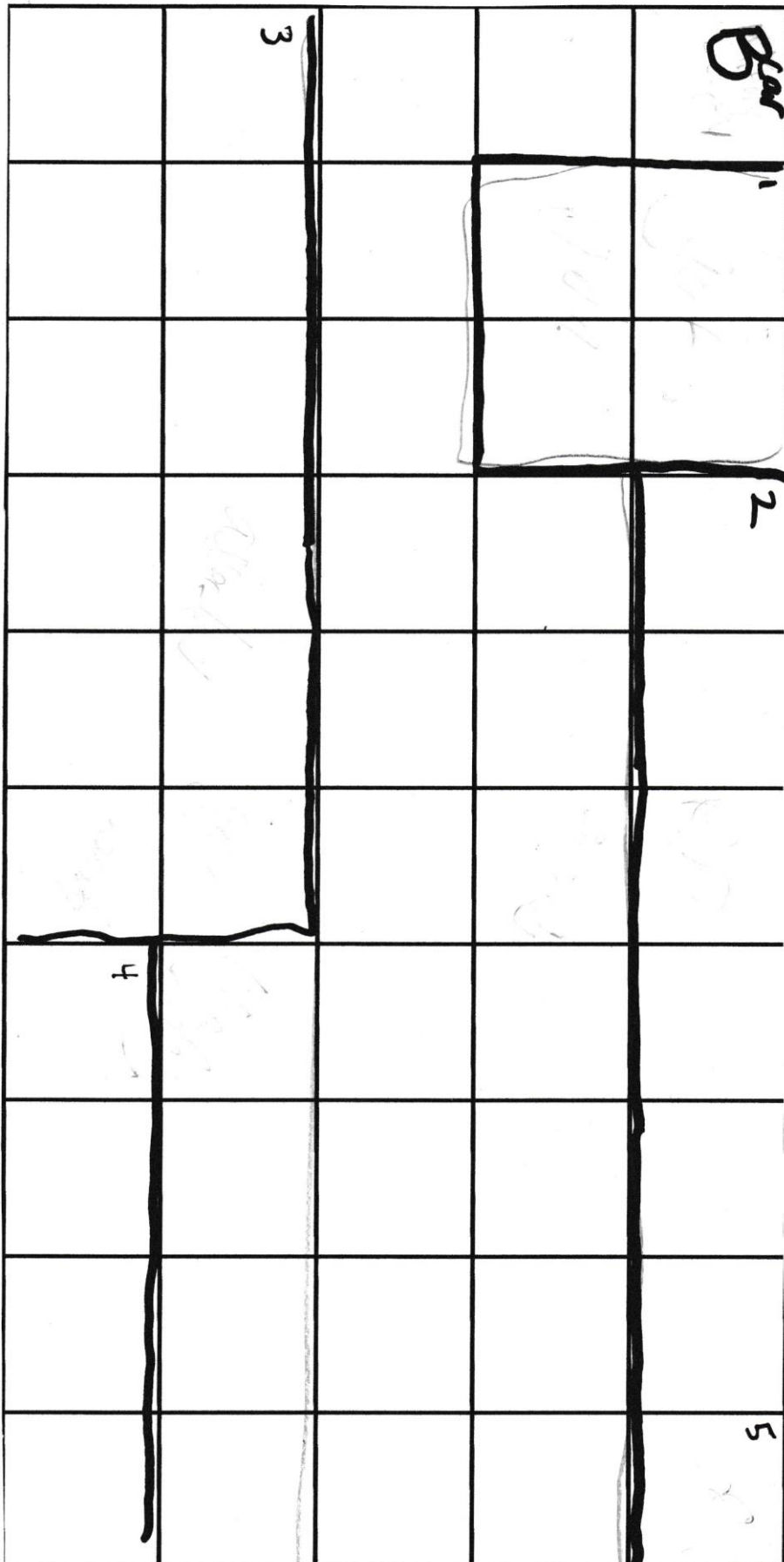
A – RPO / Mail Truck

This is full of packages but really not much of interest unless you want it to be. It is single file and the bins on either side are wooden bins full of flammable packages. The car is metal so it quickly turns into an inferno



B – Baggage

This is full of baggage but really not much of interest unless you want it to be. It is single file and the bins on either side are wooden bins full of flammable packages. The car is metal so it quickly turns into an inferno



C – Military Transport

1 – Gatling gun and flame thrower packed in wood chips

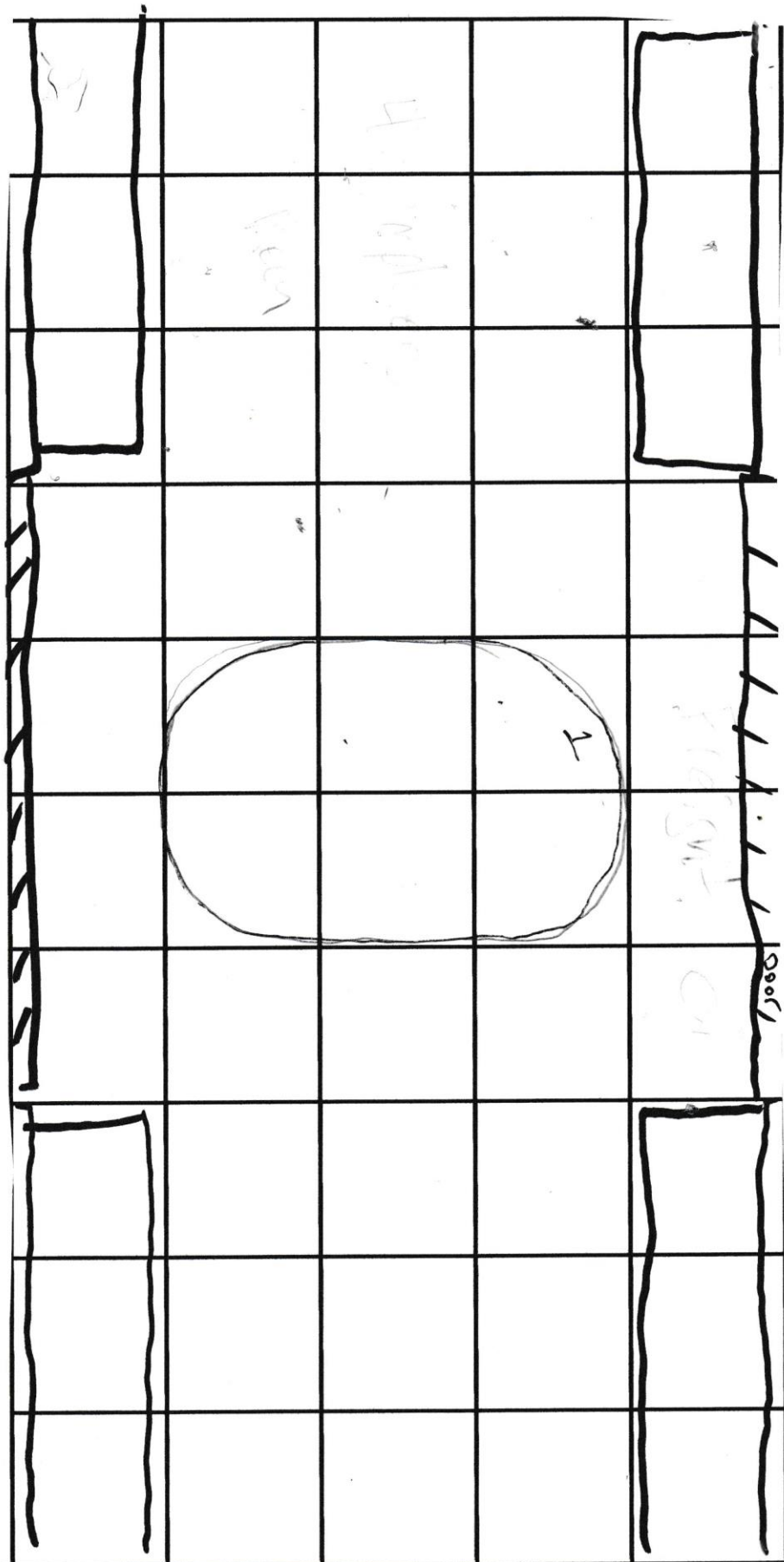
2 – Military Ordinance including Rifles

3 – Checked weapons

4 – Uniform lockers

5 – Bayonets

In this room is two of the soldiers playing guard.

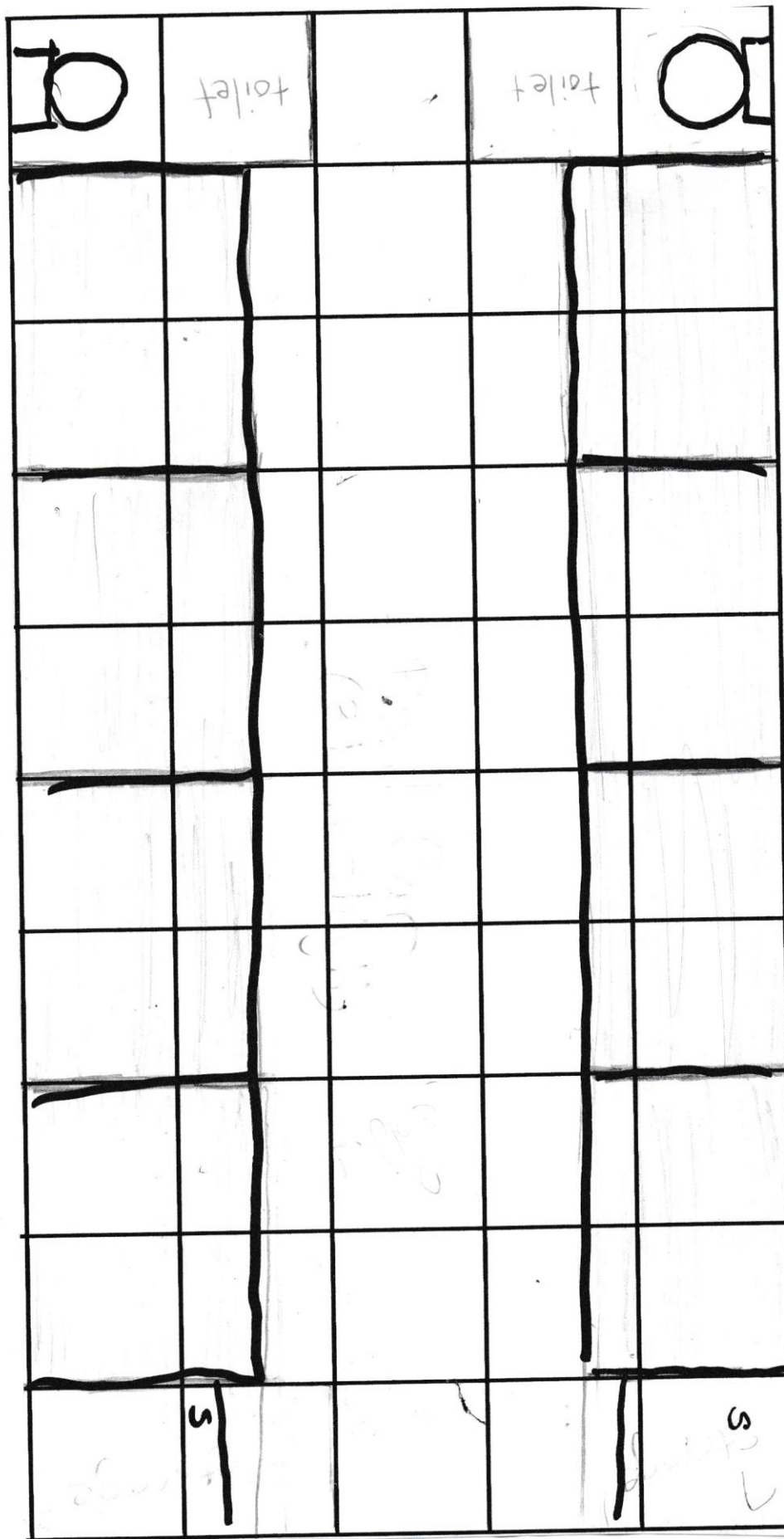


D – Military Freight

1 – Automaton

In this room there are four soldiers playing guard.

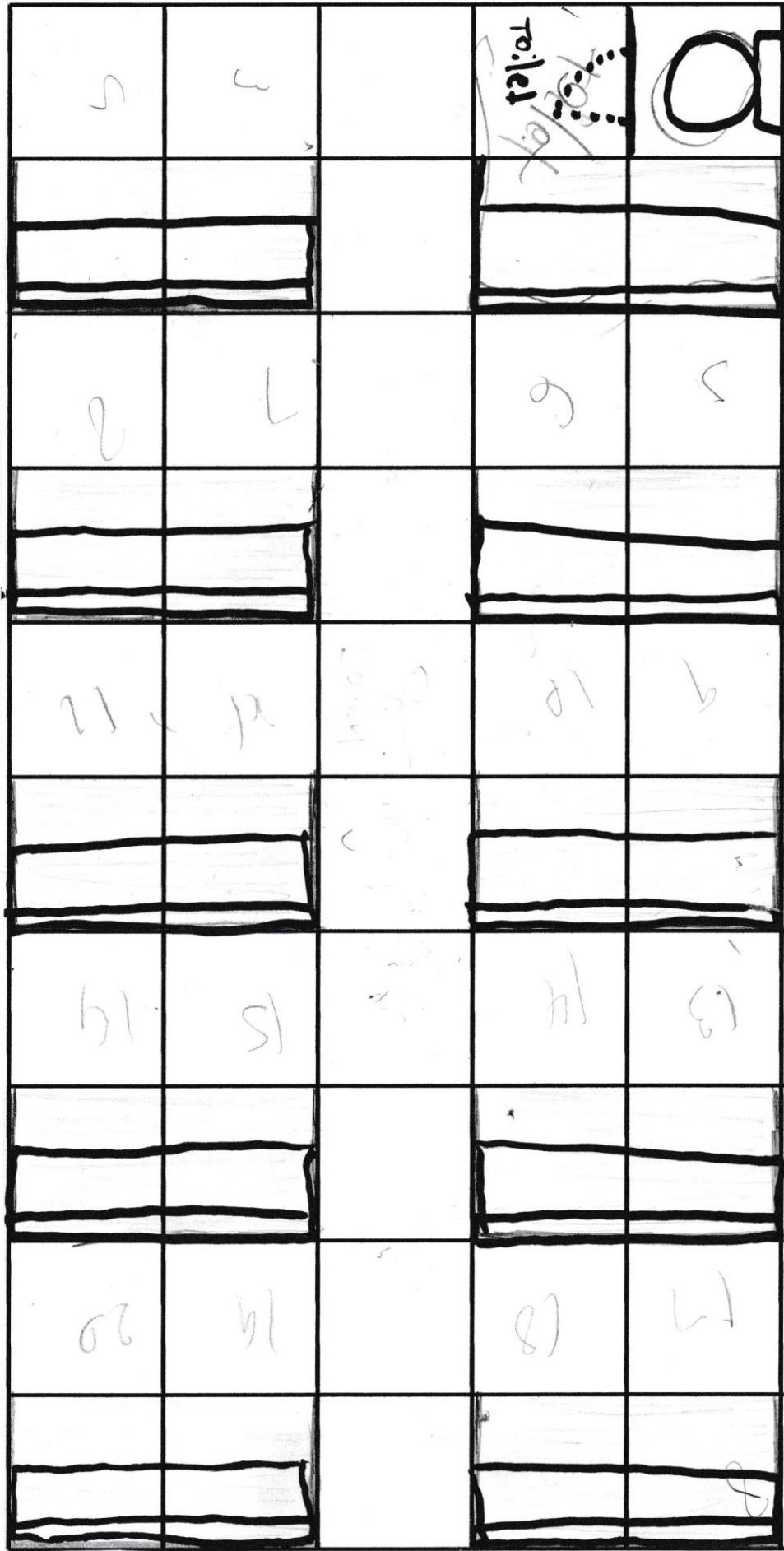
One of these has mad science and can operate the machine. The sides are lined with benches and freight car sliding doors.



E – Military bunk

Bunks are stacked three high and the remaining 8 soldiers are hanging out here.

S – storage locker



F – Passenger Car

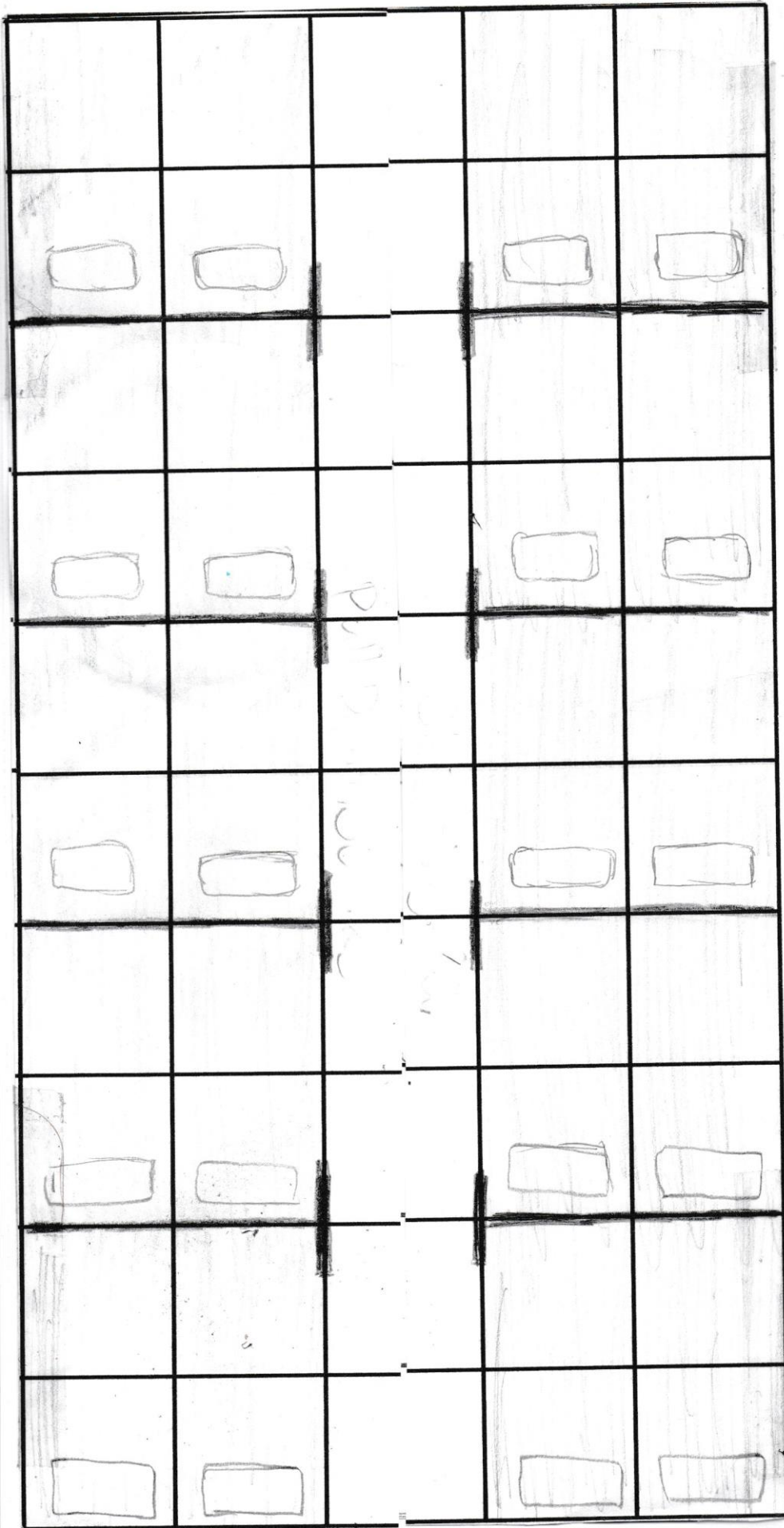
Passengers = 2 + the number of
 players is suggested

Or

Just fill the seats with the players and
 passengers

If you choose to create a Glom, use
 these characters

Ticket taker

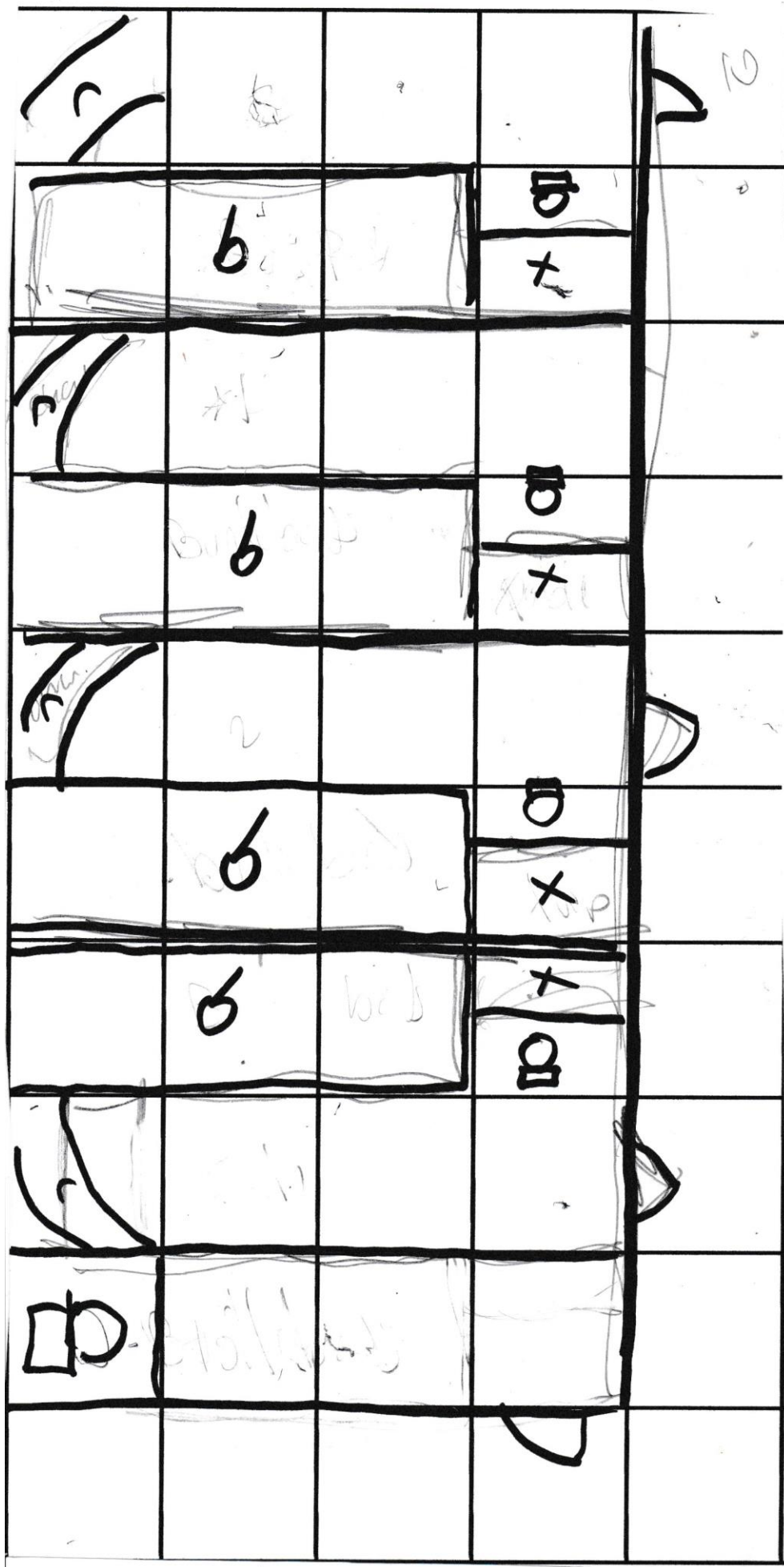


G – Sleeper Car

Regular seating that has beds that lower from the ceiling to create sleeping space.

Citizens – 1 per player (give or take based on difficulty).

Ticket taker



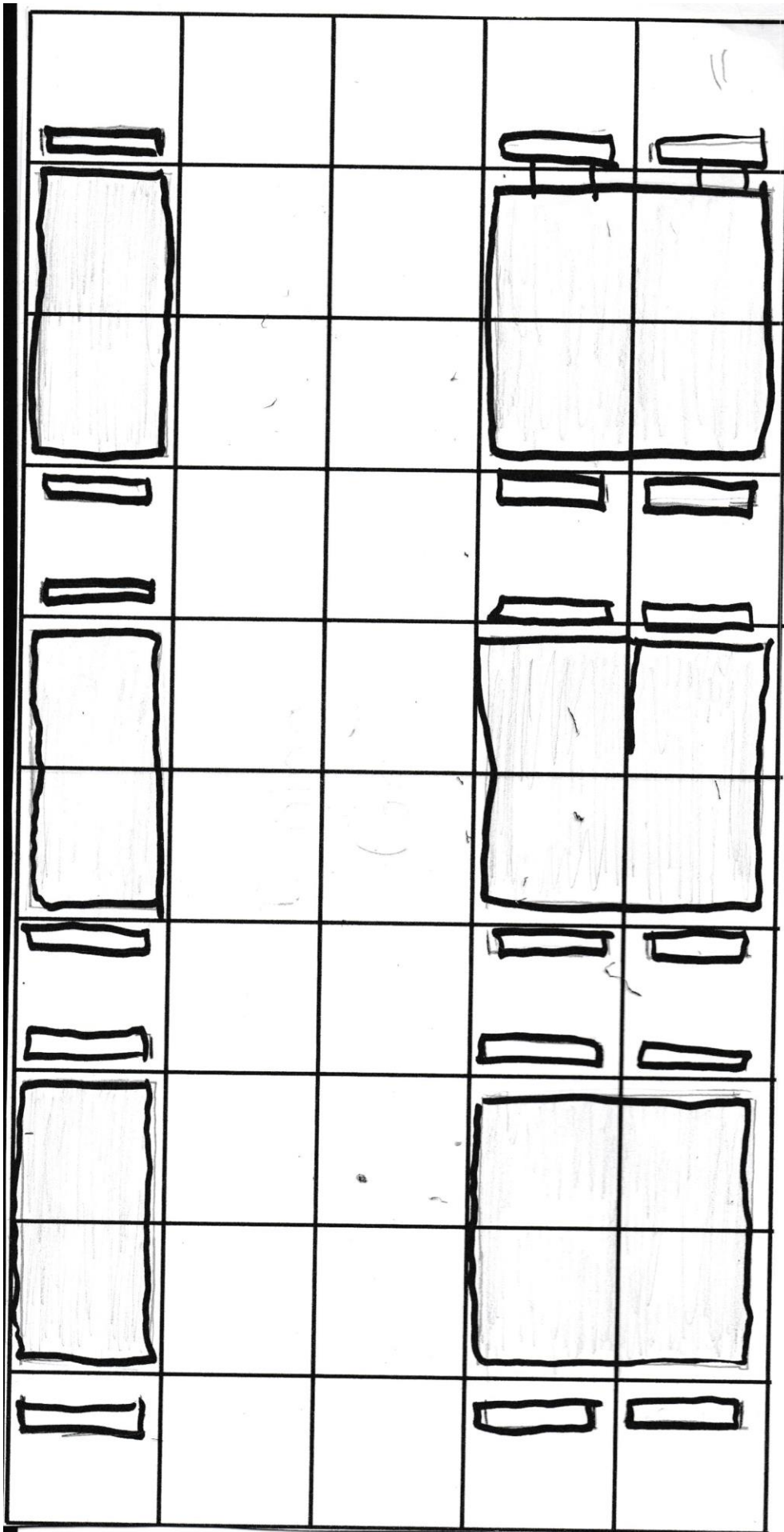
H – Family Suits / First Class Suits

b - bunk beds

t – table and chair

c – chair or lounge

These rooms are high class suits that are occupied by first class passengers. They are mostly locked. You may place anything to be found in any of these rooms. I put a Minikin from Grim Prairie Tales in one of these rooms a mechanical spider may actually fit well. You could also hide a zombie or two in these rooms as they will be some of the first to turn.

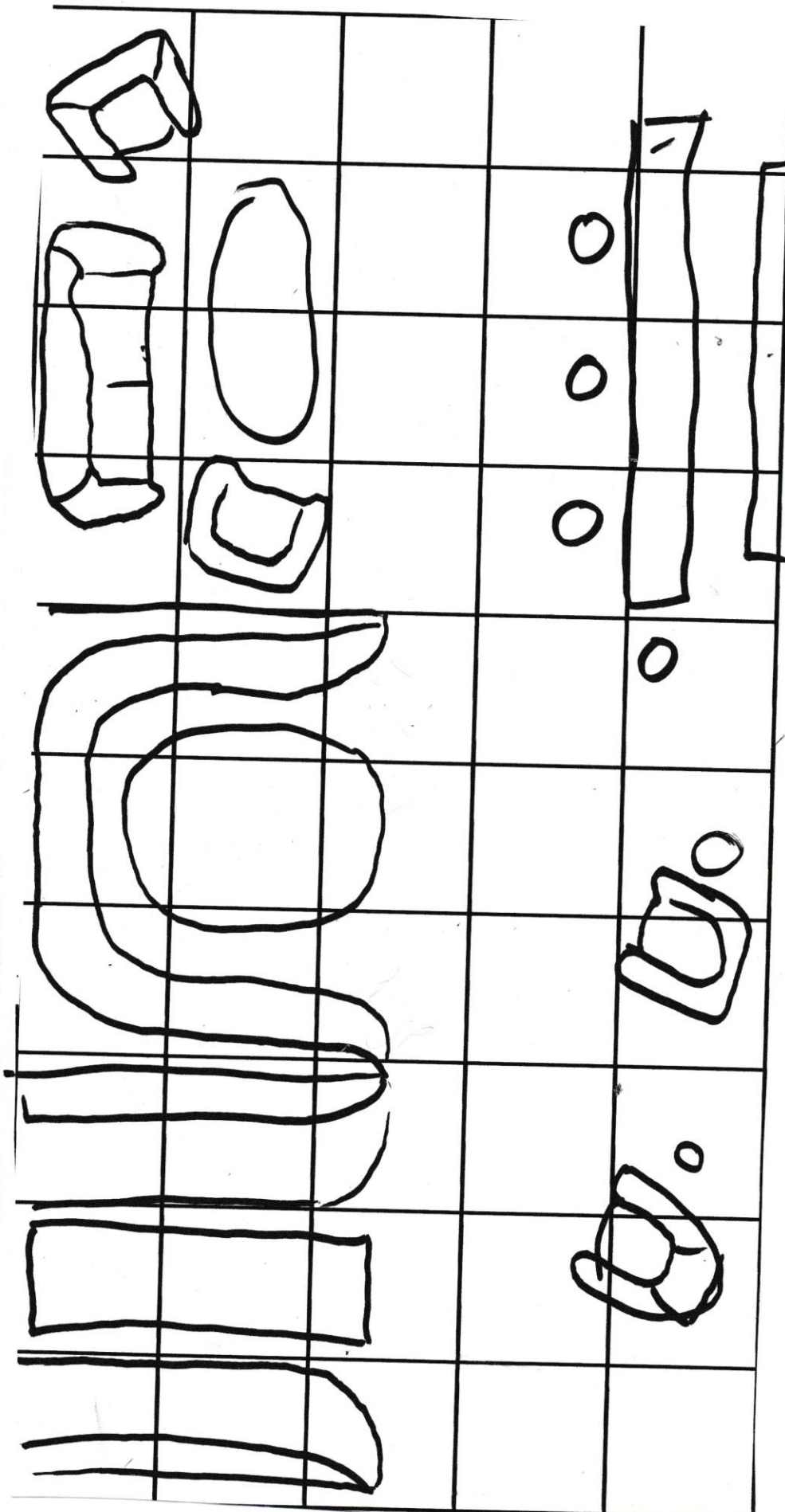


I – Dining Car

...you sit and eat here...
brainz

You can add more
passengers here if you
would like or move some
from another car to here.

You can also put a waitress
or waiter here if you would
like



I – Dining Car

This is a very nice car and is where all of your first class passengers are here and one bartender

These are the first passengers to turn

After 3 rounds the passengers turn and eat the bartender fear check if this is the first strange thing they have seen.

Fine furniture, candles, and a few small knives

J – Kitchen

p-pantry

c – counter tops

s – rolling service carts

i- Sink

w – water tank

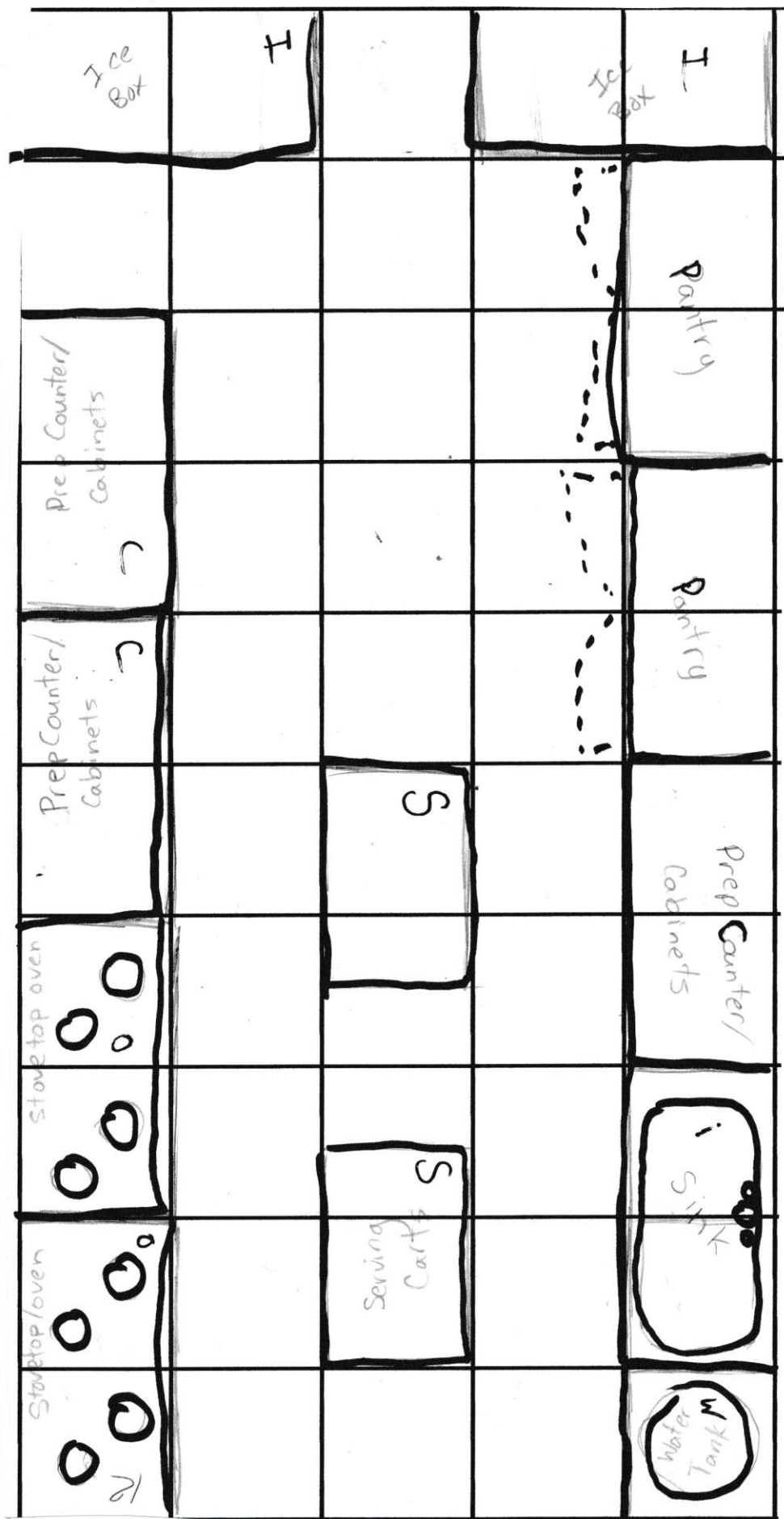
O – stove

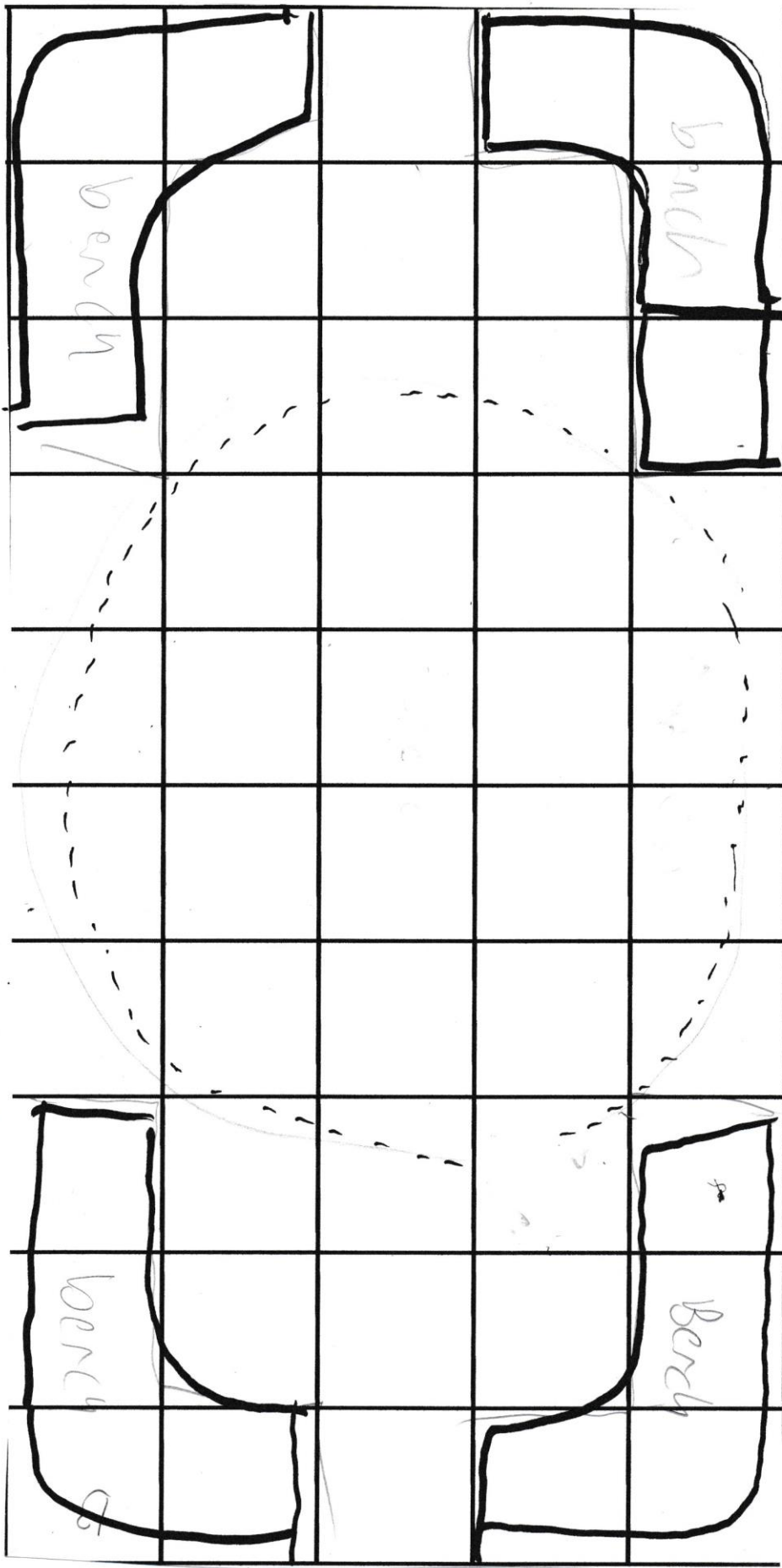
I – iceboxes

This room contains knives and other cooking tools.

With a little mad science, knowledge technology, even a really good common knowledge roll, or the mcgyver edge you could easily use the stove gas tanks as an explosive.

The door leading out of her is lock and requires a lock pick at an -4



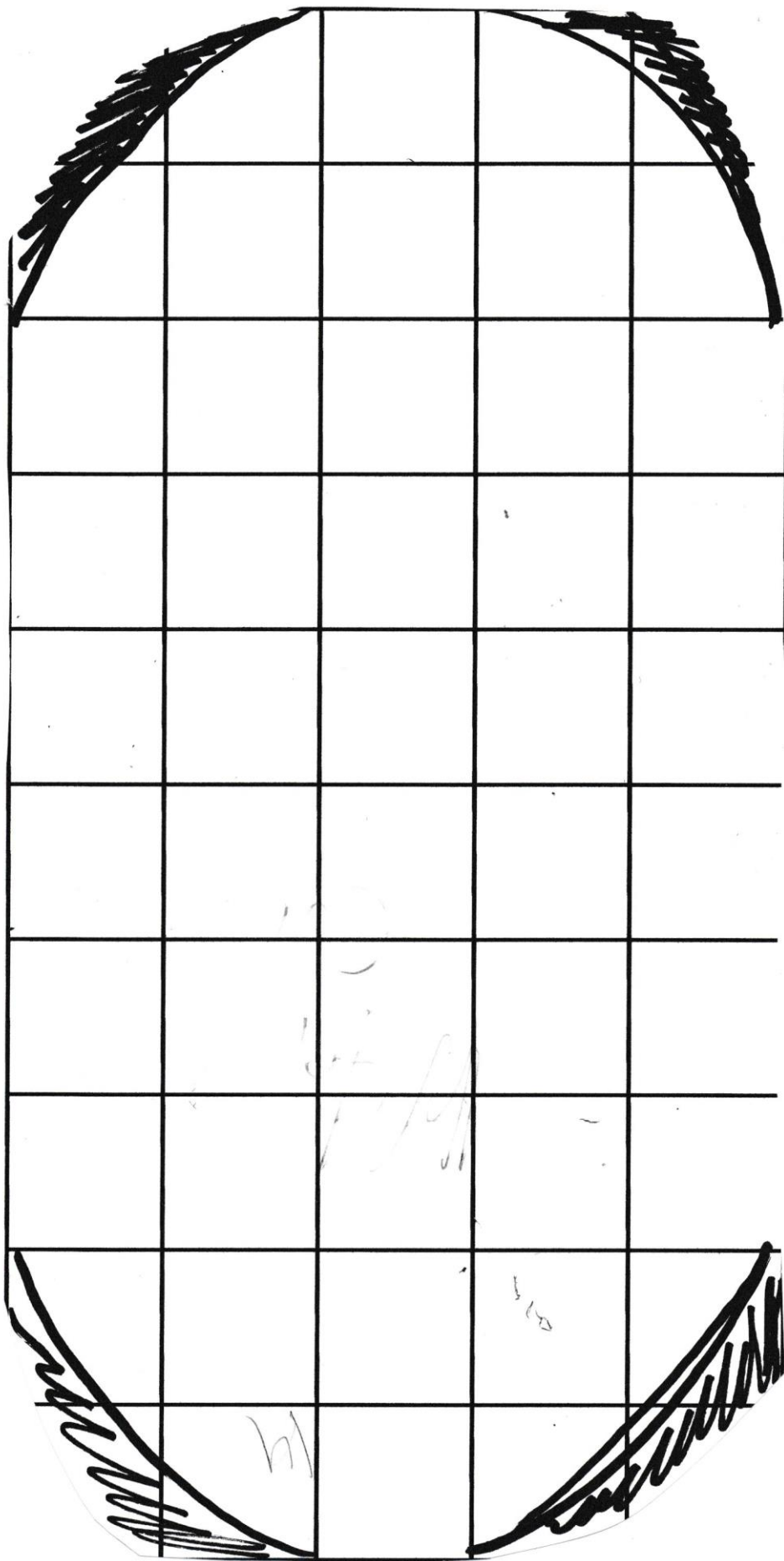


K – Dome Car

This room requires a fear check. It is lit from a pentacle on the ground glowing bright green

6 cultists surround the circle with large knives chanting. See the previous pages for further information.

This dome car has a large glass dome above the ritual.

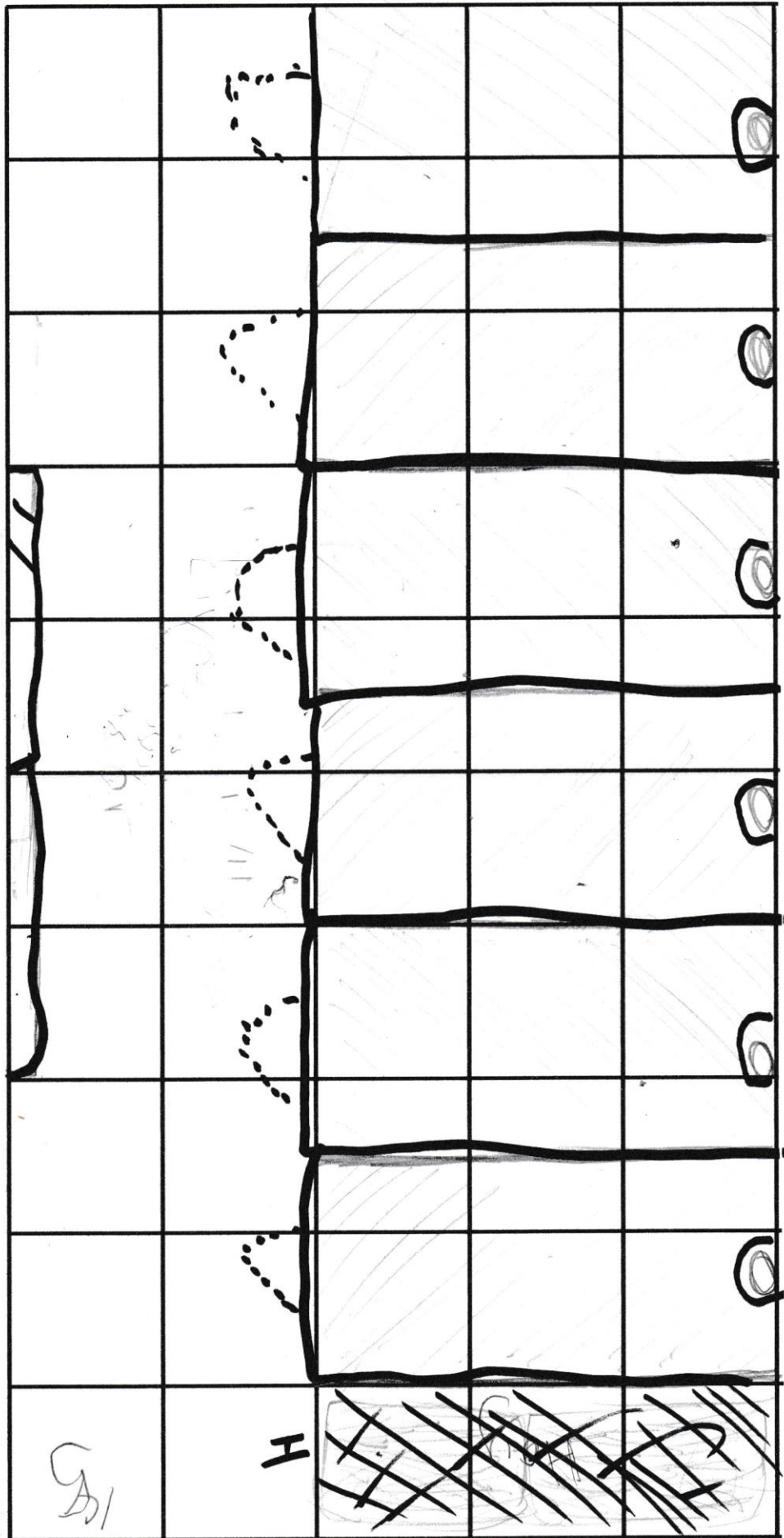


L – water tank

Previous, precious water

See “breaking things”

You cannot go through this, it is a tank. You may climb it and go over it.



M – livestock / Horse Car

Your posse's horses are stored here. This could be a bad thing.

There is a pitchfork .. and horses...